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Spirit of Shekinah

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Shekinah News for March

Oh dear – who stole the last three months?!

It seems no time since we were all madly rushing around preparing for Christmas and well-deserved time off for many – and here we are at the end of the first quarter of the year. Best to stop before I startle myself and you!

Hopefully, the beginning of your year has been not too frenetic and that whatever you do with your time, has been and continues to be fruitful and rewarding.

I do know that the time that you offer to volunteer in our organisations is certainly fruitful and very much appreciated. So thank you once again.

This year is fast developing into being somewhat crazy. As most of you would be aware, I'm based at Bethlehem Community and the house we work from is in the process of being totally renovated. Better configured working space is needed and that means a total gutting of the building and an 'internal rebuild'. So, at the moment, we are all situated in the lounge room of Bethlehem. We have totally displaced the women who are enjoying the fact that we are easily accessible and in turn providing us with some fun interactions with them.

Hopefully we'll all be back in our 'new home' by mid-June and I can start interviewing prospective volunteers in some level of comfort.

At the moment, if I need to interview at Bethlehem, it's wherever I can find a spare spot in between trying not to inconvenience the women or the builders. The renovations will be well worth all the inconvenience – for everyone.

A successful evening was held on Wednesday 17th March at McAuley Community Services for Women, where 7 women aspiring to volunteer at Mercy Care attended an information evening. Input was given by Marita the Co-ordinator, Kirsty the Children's Worker and myself on what is actually involved in becoming a volunteer in a service such as Mercy Care.

Mercy Health offer their staff paid leave to volunteer in Shekinah organisations, and various staff have done just that. Bethlehem, Corpus Christi, Mercy Care and Regina Coeli have been the beneficiaries so far, being helped out with things such as cleaning, gardening, cooking and moving furniture.

Hopefully, next time you hear from me, I'll be firmly ensconced in my new abode here at Bethlehem.

Until then, I wish you all a very happy and safe Easter.

Marg Casey

Volunteer Program Co-ordinator



Around the Network

Bethlehem Community

Renovations to the administration house are going along well. New skylights have been put in which will make for a much more environmentally-friendly workplace. The old laundry has been turned into a new meeting room and the former meeting room is now two offices – one for the Program Manager and the other for Shekinah.

Work will start on the residential area in the next couple of weeks with new office space for the residential workers and a respite room, plus a new harmony room where the women can spend quiet time or have private conversations with family or visitors.

As you can see from the photo below, work has commenced on Bethlehem's new social housing project at Thomastown. It's a very exciting time, as this project has been on the drawing board for what seems like an age – but now it's happening!

Bethlehem also has a new social enterprise – **Starworks** - where the women reap the benefits of selling goods such as worm 'wee' extracted from their very own worm farms. If you are interested in organic worm fertilizer you can place an order on 9462 3937 or office@bethlehem.com.au.

\$3 for 1 litre, \$5 - 2 litres & \$7 - 3 litres.
Your garden will love you for it!.



St Mary's House of Welcome

St Mary's fine dining dinners are held bi-monthly. Shane the fabulous St Mary's Chef cooks up a delicious three-course meal. Get together with friends to enjoy good food and great company in support of St Mary's House of Welcome.

Tickets are \$50 per head and tables of 6 are available. BYO alcohol.

Set dates for the year are:

- Thursday 20th May
- Thursday 15th July

All dinners commence at 6.30pm.

For more information or to book a table, please call 9417 7985 or email appeal@smhow.org.au



McAuley Community Services for Women

The **Regina Coeli Program** is ready for the women to get on their bikes and go. They have a volunteer who has kindly offered to repair and maintain their bikes in order for the women to get some exercise.

They have also developed a beautiful new garden area.

Medtronics are a medical supply company, and have recently become a donor to **Mercy Care**. They have set up a website where you can vote for Mercy Care as one of their nominated charities. As well

as giving information about Mercy Care Medtronic have \$20,000 to give away to their two nominated charities – Royal Flying Doctor Service and Mercy Care. Each vote is worth \$1 (but costs you nothing). The URL is www.medtronicgiving.com.au and the website will run until the end of April. So please add your vote.

McAuley Community Services for Women is working on a social enterprise – McAuley Works. More information will be available on this new initiative in the June newsletter.

Good Samaritan Inn

Welcome to Danielle Laville, the new Co-ordinator at The Inn and Shannon Smith the new Administrative Assistant. With Danielle and Shannon on board, Sr Michelle Reid will have some valuable space to work on raising the profile of The Inn.

The Inn is undergoing the last of their renovations with a new laundry nearing completion.

The new garden area is looking great with different garden 'rooms' for vegetables, herbs, quiet area and a children's play area. All these improvements will go to make the guests' stay even more homely and welcoming than it already is.

The Good Samaritan Inn Dinner Dance will be held on 1st October and is always a great night! More info in the June newsletter

Corpus Christi Community

Corpus Christi Community Greenvale is currently objecting to plans by Liquorland to open what would be the first bottle shop at the Greenvale Shopping Centre.

This is not the first time that an application for a packaged liquor licence has been sought. There have been prior occasions but each time the application has either been withdrawn or denied by the licensing authority.

Corpus Christi Community is only 300

metres from the Greenvale Shopping Centre so the prospect of a bottle shop so close is cause for serious concern.

On Tuesday 29 March 2010 a Panel Hearing convened by the Office of the Director of Liquor Licensing was conducted at which the applicant and objectors stated their respective positions.

A decision arising from the Panel Hearing is not expected for several weeks.



Shekinah

You may, or may not, have wondered where the name **Shekinah** comes from. It's a Hebrew word meaning 'presence of God'. That 'presence' was often translated as made manifest by a light resting on or over someone, also as having wings which offered protection for those seeking refuge and even in Jewish mysticism, as the feminine of God – often translated as nurturing.

It's an amazing 'story' which has travelled through the ages from early Israelite history to the Christian tradition.

I'll put a small piece of the history in the next couple of issues to give you an idea of why the name was chosen and how appropriate it is for our Network.

I've included some photos of the new Shekinah office space which is taking shape really well. It will be a much more workable office and I will be able to use the new meeting room for training and information nights which will be great.

Through the HACC network, I have arranged training for several volunteers and staff from various organisations in the Network and I am currently preparing a Shekinah training schedule for both staff and volunteers, primarily in the area of family violence.

When completed I shall email it to you. It is geared to individuals, staff and volunteers.



Old laundry - new meeting room to seat 12 – cut-out will be new window



Shekinah's new office space with more light through glass doors and with compact furniture it will be a great place to 'call home'.

