



September 2010  
Volume 2 Issue 3

# Spirit of Shekinah

Shekinah Homeless Services  
38 Willoughby Street  
Reservoir Vic 3073

Tel: 9462 3933  
Fax: 9462 4980  
Mob: 0448 211 225  
Email: [shekinah@shekinah.org.au](mailto:shekinah@shekinah.org.au)  
[www.shekinah.org.au](http://www.shekinah.org.au)

## Shekinah News for September

**"Volunteers aren't paid because they are worthless, but because they are priceless" (Unknown).**

How true are these words I came across recently? As I sit in my beautifully renovated new office, I'm looking at an amazingly dedicated volunteer painting the outside of the building here at Bethlehem Community (where I'm based).

The horrendous state of the woodwork on the windows, garden encroaching on the areas to be painted and jolly cold winds are certainly not deterring her as she makes her way around the house.

This is but one of the dedicated volunteers in the Shekinah Network and I use her as an example because she is one I'm seeing on a regular basis and her commitment is far and above the 'call of duty'. Her worth is absolutely priceless!!

There are, of course, many, many more like her in all our organisations; from those who do sleepovers, cook, clean, accompany people to medical appointments, have a cuppa with the lonely or provide their expertise by sitting on boards and management committees.

Sometimes it is very difficult to know how to show our appreciation to our volunteers – not that they look for it - but a simple thank-you goes a long, long way to making someone feel appreciated.

As many of you would be aware, Shekinah organises a Ball every 18 months. It's a great way for the people who use the services provided by the Shekinah Network to have a 'night on the town' and a chance to dress up and enjoy themselves. It's also a way in which we can bring together as many volunteers as possible to join with us and enjoy 'partying' with the people with and for whom they volunteer.

I'd encourage you to put the date of the next Shekinah Ball in your diaries as it is sure to be as good, if not better, than previous Balls. It will be held on **Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2011** at the Collingwood Town Hall.

Feel free to not only come along and join in the fun, but bring friends and family if you feel they would enjoy it – it may even encourage some to volunteer. Obviously, I'll have more information in further issues of *Spirit of Shekinah*.

I hope that you are enjoying your volunteering, and that your volunteering experience is in turn rewarding you with great satisfaction. Hopefully for you all springtime, and the promise of warmth as well as seeing nature bursting with new growth and life, is putting a 'spring in your step'.

*Marg Casey*

Volunteer Program Co-ordinator



## Around the Network

### Bethlehem Community

Bethlehem is an exciting place to be at the moment. The house is being painted, garden done, new water tanks in the front which form a new front 'fence' with provision for a 'garden' on top, and the new project at Thomastown nearing completion.

An Outreach Worker has been employed to work with the women who move into the complex and discussions are underway with McAuley Community Services for Women to determine who takes up residence.

Several women from Bethlehem will move in, leaving some vacancies for

women who have been on the waiting list for a long time. So, all-in-all, by the end of the year, there will be major changes at Willoughby Street.



Some of the women helping to plant out the water tank 'garden'



Thomastown project starting to take shape



Finished tank with garden on top and in front



### Briar Terrace

The friends who come to Briar Terrace for companionship rarely, if ever, have had the chance to get away from the rooming houses or flats where they live. With that in mind, volunteers took several of those friends from Briar Terrace to Healesville for a short holiday.

Not only did the friends enjoy it, but also the volunteers, as they were privileged and rewarded to have one man thank them by telling them that this was the first holiday he has ever had in his life! Wow!



## Corpus Christi Community

Corpus Christi Community Greenvale, along with many others, was successful in having the application by Liquorland to open a bottle shop at the Greenvale Shopping Centre rejected by the Director of Liquor Licensing.

However Liquorland has the right to seek a formal explanation from the Director as to the reasons to not support the application. Corpus Christi Community understands that

this right has been exercised by Liquorland but it is not known how long this matter will take. Once the outline of reason(s) has been received Liquorland will have 28 days to decide if it wishes to take the matter, on appeal, to VCAT.

Presuming that the case goes to VCAT, Corpus Christi Community is not expecting a hearing to occur before 2011.

## Good Samaritan Inn

On Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> July, those who volunteer for cooking, cleaning and sorting out clothes at Good Samaritan Inn went to the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation Christmas in July luncheon held at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (Jeff's shed). We were welcomed and directed to our table, which was set up in a very festive way.

There were about 1,000 people comprising staff, volunteers, carers and clients. The food, music and singing were great. As a worker I felt that this event was rewarding for our volunteers who give their time and make the guests at the Inn feel special and becoming aware that out there someone cares and loves

them. Through this event it was the turn of the volunteers to feel special and loved. It also confirmed the fact that they are doing a great job by volunteering. The picture below speaks for itself.



Eileen and Robyn enjoying the lunch

## McAuley Community Services for Women Regina Coeli Program

Life has been busy at Regina Coeli.

A Melbourne Rotary group has assisted in gardening and repairs to the fence which was falling down.

Three students are providing massages, and self-healing classes are provided by a professional teacher/healer. Both are met with great attendance and enthusiasm.

One of the staff has been accepted for a secondment to Das West to do Dual Diagnosis training, while most of the day staff have completed Mental Health First Aid training.

Two former residents were invited to speak at 'cake and conversation' to tell their story and this group continues to be well attended.



Women attended the Mount Lilydale Mercy College production of Cinderella which they enjoyed.

Theme nights have been introduced to the last 2 birthday nights, in which residents made their own hats and masks for hat night and masquerade night.

Staff attended Wishin to help serve breakfast to heighten awareness of homelessness.



## Shekinah

The Volunteer Program is currently conducting a survey on the level of volunteer satisfaction. The plan is to work through the majority of the member organisations to determine the level of satisfaction of volunteers in the hope of making their experience more worthwhile. It is also a good opportunity for each organisation to hear some feedback from volunteers as well as an opportunity for volunteers to provide that feedback anonymously.

I have accepted an invitation to join the HACC Training Advisory Committee which will give me an insight into how the training program is developed, along with the opportunity to have more input on the kind of training which I believe will benefit the differing requirements of our volunteers and staff.

On a more reflective note, I offer another small insight into the meaning of Shekinah to follow on from the March issue.

The understanding of Shekinah has travelled through the Jewish texts to the Christian texts of the New

Discussions have begun with Gamblers Anonymous to run staff Professional Development days and groups with the woman.

A woman on outreach was the interim cook despite thinking when she entered Regina that she would never feel able to cook again, and is now looking toward starting her own 'Menu-del-Dia' restaurant.



Testament. In most cases in all of these texts, Shekinah is understood to mean 'God', and particularly in the Jewish texts, it is noted that wherever the Israelites went in exile, the Shekinah accompanied them.

The imagery of presence, protection and nurture is powerful when you look at what the members of Shekinah do for today's people in exile – the most powerless and marginalised who are often shunned by society. Our organisations walk with and offer shelter to those most in need - actions which embody principles of Catholic social teaching some of which are; the dignity of the human person, respect for life, the common good for all, solidarity with those on the margins and the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable.

The words below which feature on our Shekinah letterhead and in all our publications say it all;

*"Your eyes will see a home that is secure, a tent not to be moved, none of its stakes ever to be pulled up, none of its ropes ever to be broken."* Isaiah 33.20



### St Mary's House of Welcome

St Mary's has had some good press recently with an article on Sr Roseanne Murphy in *The Age* earlier this month, a YouTube video and the website featured on the Catholic Archdiocese website.

There's a bike ride from Warrnambool to Geelong, along the Great Ocean Road, in October to raise funds for St Mary's and a health centre in Uganda. Three

footy legends will take part, Ron Barassi, Peter 'Crackers' Keenan and Wayne Schimmelbusch.

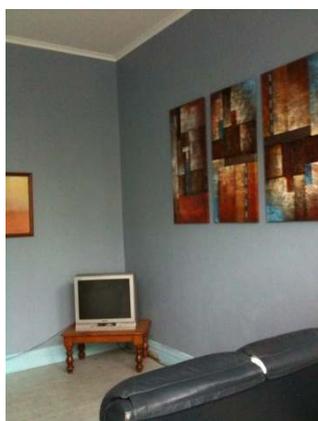
On 21<sup>st</sup> November at Elwood, there is a touch football competition entitled Wine Rules. This is a chance to join in a day of wine, touch football and listen to live bands in the sun and more entertainment. For more details contact St Mary's on 9417 7985.



### The Way Community

The Way Community has been getting a fresh coat of paint, as you can see in the photos below. Soon all that will needed is to polish the floors, repair the kitchen, get a new roof, maybe an extension out the back... okay, so there is always a lot to be done! Of course The Way Community is not just a building. There is a friendly crowd of residents, volunteers and staff, and a few birthdays around the middle of the year gave the community a great excuse to head out for a social drink. While it is a greater challenge for some more than others to stay sober all day and

brave a chilly Melbourne night, this fun and diverse group proves time and time again that it is able to cut it in the trendy pubs of Fitzroy. The Way Community has even made it into the newspaper; you might have seen the photo of The Way's Coordinator – Jill – snapped at the Lord Mayor's Fund Christmas in July lunch, where The Way Community's table was arguably the most vocal of all door prize winners. Last, but certainly not least, August saw the volunteers of The Way Community come together for the Future Directions Day. Phew! It has been busy at The Way.



Left: Freshly painted lounge room

Right: Freshly painted entry

